

0 ft
the bayou

19,836 ft
False River pay,
1975

29,032 ft
Everest, upside
down

30,862 ft
Highlander TD,
2026

COVER STORY · THE NOVEMBER 19 LUNCHEON

Nearly Six Miles Down

A gas discovery under a Louisiana bayou waited fourteen years for its confirmation well. On November 19, Kevin McMichael presents "Highlander: Confirmation of a Giant Gas Field in South Louisiana."

PAGE 11

Forty-four, and counting

The dues comeback, and a thank-you to every member who renewed.

PAGE 12

A membership system of our own

Apply online, sign on screen, and track every step.

PAGE 15

\$168,270 and climbing

The chapter is 16.8% of the way to \$1 million.

PAGE 16

Permits, pipes, and a lease sale

Seven stories from Texas, the Gulf, and the US.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Thank You, and Tear It Apart

Cheers and Happy October, everyone!

Much of this issue covers the work behind the scenes that keeps SIPES Houston running, so let me start with some thank-yous.

First, to our sponsors. Our luncheons, the Deal Buyers Event, and most of what we do happen because these companies stand behind us. Page 3 is for them, and I hope you will thank them in person. Thanks also to Jeff Allen, our Deal Buyers Chair, whose June event netted about \$12,400.

Second, to the 44 of you who renewed this fall after a payment changeover let your automatic renewals lapse. None of you did anything wrong. If you are one of the 28 still to go, Shop/Dues on sipeshouston.org takes a minute.

That dues recovery was one part of a bigger push this year: we built our own tools to make the chapter easier to join and easier to run.

Smectite, our membership system.
Apply online, sign on screen, and track every step.

Dendrite, our consultant directory.
Companies will find and hire a SIPES Houston consultant directly, once the board approves it.

AutoKeep, our bookkeeper. A month of statements becomes the treasurer's report in about twenty minutes instead of hours.

The website. Sturdier, with backups, better email delivery, and control of our own domain.

I am grateful to have had a hand in these, and in the Vanguard account I started as Treasurer in 2023, which with steady contributions has grown from about \$42,300 to about \$155,600. AI has become a big part of my life this year, and of how one volunteer could build all of this. None of it would matter without our board, Meghan Jones, our office manager, and every volunteer who tests things, catches mistakes, and keeps luncheons running. Thank you.

On October 15, Jory Pacht follows natural gas to the power grid in "Flip the Switch." On November 19, Kevin McMichael tells the story of Highlander, a deep Tuscaloosa gas discovery that took fourteen years and 30,862 feet to prove. Then mark December 17 for the Christmas Drilling Deal Luncheon. As always, tear this issue apart the way I ask you to tear apart my prospects, and tell me what you want to see next.



Cheers, **Tanner Bowersox**

Treasurer, Technology Chair, Newsletter Editor, and Past Chairman (2025 to 2026)

Photo: sipeshouston.org

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THANK YOU

The Companies Behind the Chapter

Luncheons, the Deal Buyers Event, and the programs in this issue happen because these companies stand behind SIPES Houston. They do a great deal for us, and we are grateful to every one of them.

	Altair RESOURCES	Wilcox OIL & GAS, INC.
	Block T PETROLEUM	 BRUINGTON ENGINEERING, LLC
		KiwiEnergy LTD.
	Lauson DRILLING	 MERCENARY SALES
Miller Energy INC.		
SABATA ENERGY CONSULTANTS		
 THUNDER EXPLORATION, INC.		 JILL CONVERSATIONAL AI FOR OIL & GAS REGULATORY ENGINEERING LAW TAX INVESTING OILBOT.PRO

To sponsor a luncheon or the Deal Buyers Event, contact John Asma at johna@z-terra.com.



OUR OCTOBER LUNCHEON SPONSOR

Seeing the Oil Patch from Orbit

SynMax turns satellite imagery, AI, and its own analytics into verified intelligence for energy and maritime markets, and it calls Houston home.

40M+ km²

of Earth's surface analyzed daily

4M+

wells tracked

50+

data sources

1 to 3 mo

ahead of EIA production data

WHAT THEY DO FOR INDEPENDENTS

SynMax was founded by Bill Perkins, the natural gas trader behind Skylar Capital, and Eric Anderson, its CEO, who pioneered pulling in satellite imagery at scale at Skylar. It is based in Houston, with offices in Washington, D.C., and London.

Its approach, which it calls "pixels to proof," is to check what is actually happening on the ground instead of waiting on self-reported numbers. When an operator reports production, SynMax validates it from space.

Hyperion tracks rigs, frac crews, DUCs, turn-in-lines, and

production across North America with daily satellite imaging.

BasinIQ, built for upstream teams, follows offset activity and completions and answers questions about wells, acreage, and operators in plain English.

Vulcan watches power infrastructure, LNG facilities, and data centers as they are built, a fitting match for Jory Pacht's October talk on the grid (page 5).

Barry Rava of Icarus Oil and Gas brought SynMax to the chapter. Its pipeline tracking turns up in our oil patch news on page 16.

“From pixels to proof.

HOW SYNMAX DESCRIBES ITS APPROACH

WITH THANKS

Thank you, SynMax

SynMax Intelligence is sponsoring our October 15 luncheon. Thank you to everyone at SynMax for standing behind SIPES Houston.

LEARN MORE

synmax.com

Sources: synmax.com, its energy and about pages, October 2026; Barry Rava to the chapter, Oct 1, 2026.

UPCOMING

Luncheon Talk | Thursday, October 15, 2026

Jory A. Pacht, Ph.D. • Altair Resources • Petroleum Club of Houston

Flip the Switch

Jory Pacht spent four decades finding hydrocarbons and building companies to produce them. His October 15 talk follows a growing share of that gas to the power grid.



Transmission towers near Webster, Texas. Photo: BFS Man, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Pacht's abstract opens with a fact most of us never stop to consider: "Electricity is the only commodity that is consumed the moment it is created." Flip a switch, and somewhere a generator works a little harder in the same instant.

The talk follows the power in three legs. **Generation:** thermal and hydro plants spin machines that make alternating current directly, at 17,000 to 32,000 volts. Wind, solar, and batteries make direct current at roughly 640 to 1,000 volts and need inverters to convert it.

Transmission: transformers step voltage up, to as much as 1,000,000 volts, so the same power

travels on less current and loses far less along the way.

Distribution: transformers step it back down. The last one, on the pole outside your house, delivers split-phase service, 120 volts for the lamp and 240 for the dryer.

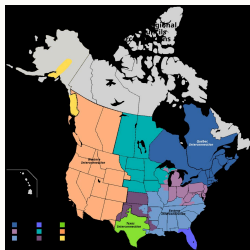
Every machine in an interconnection turns in step, with the current reversing 60 times a second. The country has three interconnections: the Eastern, the Western, and ERCOT, which is Texas's own.

Why a room of geologists should care: natural gas supplies about 40% of US electricity, according to EIA's October outlook. The grid is one of the biggest customers for what this chapter finds.

GRID MATH IN ONE BOX

$$P = V \times I \quad \text{Loss} = I^2 \times R$$

Double the voltage, halve the current, and line loss falls to a quarter. Hence high-voltage lines.



Map: Bouchecl, after NERC, CC BY-SA 3.0



THE SPEAKER

**Jory A. Pacht,
Ph.D.**

Technical program chair, SIPES Houston

Photo: courtesy of Jory A. Pacht

Began at ARCO in 1980, then RPI and TGS. Founded Seis-Strat Services in 1992 and sold it in 2007. Took EnergyQuest II to about 5,500 BOEPD and ran Pintail Oil and Gas past 2,000 BOEPD as CEO. More than 80 papers and five best-paper awards; an Ohio State Distinguished Alumnus, 2022.

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP



Jeff Lund

Photo: sipeshouston.org

Jeff will receive the SIPES Honorary Membership Award at our October 15 luncheon. Jeff chairs the chapter's Public Relations and Maps in Schools work and is sponsorship chair for GeoGulf 2027.

THANK YOU, SYNMAX

Our October luncheon sponsor. On the program: Barry Rava of Icarus Oil and Gas, with results from sister company SynMax Energy. See page 4.



Photo: Ken Lund, CC BY-SA 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

COVER STORY

Fourteen Years, 30,862 Feet

Kevin McMichael has spent nearly fifty years reading the Gulf Coast. On November 19 he presents "Highlander: Confirmation of a Giant Gas Field in South Louisiana," the story of a deep gas discovery under St. Martin Parish.

On February 16, 2026, Highlander Oil & Gas logged the confirmation well for a gas discovery made fourteen years earlier beneath Bayou Long Field in St. Martin Parish, Louisiana. The well found significant Tuscaloosa gas pay, proved a column of more than 2,100 feet, and was drilled to 30,862 feet. Once completed, McMichael writes, it will be among the deepest, highest-pressure gas wells in the world.

The line in his abstract that an operator will reread is about the second well. It "was drilled much more efficiently than the prior well due to lessons learned and effective coordination among the drilling and evaluation team,

enhancing the economics of future full field development."

Finding the gas was one problem. Getting back to it for less was the other.

THE TALK

McMichael will walk through the team's current read on the field's stratigraphy and structural evolution, and the diagenetic factors that made an ultra-deep reservoir possible.

THE EXPLORER

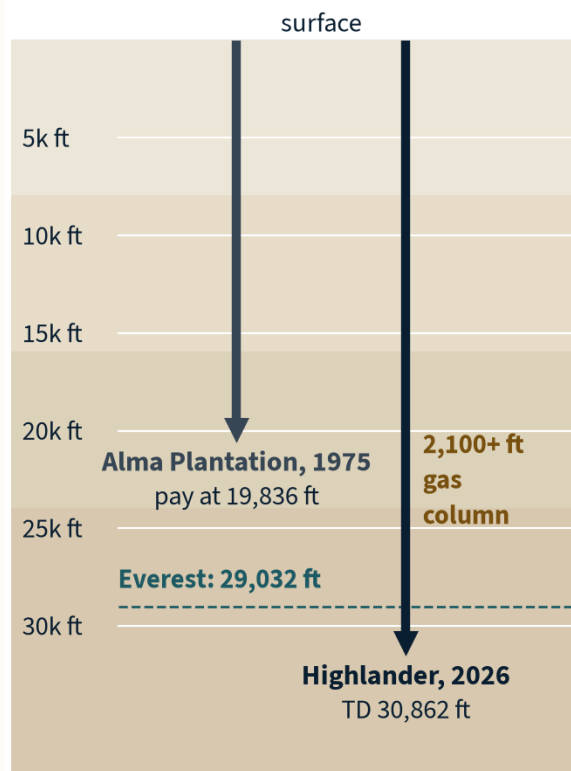
His career reads like a map of Gulf Coast exploration. Texaco in 1978. Louisiana Land & Exploration from 1981, rising to vice president of exploration in 1995. Executive vice president at Meridian Resource, then senior vice

president of exploration at Sonat and at El Paso Production after El Paso's 2001 merger with Coastal.

In 2004 he founded Claymore Oil & Gas to chase deep Gulf Coast opportunities, and in 2014 New Orleans Land and Exploration Company, NOLEX, to generate South Louisiana prospects. He is a Tulane graduate in geology and anthropology, an AAPG Certified Petroleum Geologist, a licensed geologist in four states, and a SIPES member.

ON SITE

According to AAPG Explorer, Highlander Oil & Gas, led by CEO Gloria Moncrief, drilled the well with Coastal Drilling's Rig 22, and Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry visited the location.



Half a century, eleven thousand feet. The 1975 well that opened the Lower Tuscaloosa Trend, beside the 2026 Highlander confirmation well.

Graphic: SIPES Houston. Data: J. A. Spencer, GCAGS 2015; K. J. McMichael abstract, 2026

“Even after nearly 50 years of exploring, I have never considered myself as anything other than a work in progress, new ideas and methods still intrigue me.

KEVIN MCMICHAEL, IN "THE LONG ROAD TO DISCOVERY," AAPG EXPLORER, JULY 1, 2026

FOR SCALE

The trend that started at 19,836 feet

On May 31, 1975, about 15 miles northwest of Baton Rouge, Chevron completed the No. 1 Alma Plantation as the discovery well for False River Field. Perforations at 19,836 to 19,916 feet flowed 20 million cubic feet of gas and 80 barrels of condensate a day, and the South Louisiana Lower Tuscaloosa Trend was open.

The first maps drew the trend 30 miles wide and 200 long, with resource guesses from 3 to 60 trillion cubic feet equivalent. Drilling shrank it. A sweet spot has produced about 4 Tcfe, and three fields, Port Hudson, Judge Digby, and Morganza, account for 67% of the trend's output.

Highlander's total depth sits about 11,000 feet below the False River pay, farther south and west.

Source: Jeff A. Spencer, "The 40th Anniversary of South Louisiana's Lower Tuscaloosa Trend," GCAGS Transactions, 2015



THE SPEAKER

Kevin J. McMichael

Founder of NOLEX and Claymore Oil & Gas L.P.; president of Claymore Exploration LLC. Member of NOGS, LIOGA, SIPES, and HGS.

Photo: courtesy of Kevin J. McMichael

BE IN THE ROOM

Thursday, November 19

Petroleum Club of Houston, 1201 Louisiana St.

Wine 11:00 am · Lunch and lecture 11:30 am to 1:30 pm

"Highlander: Confirmation of a Giant Gas Field in South Louisiana"

Pricing: early-bird until noon on Monday, November 16; late and walk-in tickets are \$65 for members and guests.

Tickets: sipeshouston.org/events. Season-pass holders, please RSVP so we can count chairs.

RECAP

From the September 17 Luncheon Talk

Jonathan R. Rotzien, Ph.D. • Basin Dynamics

Are Explorers Born, or Built?

Rotzien spent five years and more than 30 interviews looking for what effective geoscience leaders share. His answer gives the rest of us something to work on.

Conventional wisdom says leaders are born. Rotzien's talk took the question seriously and then turned it around: if that were the whole story, as he put it in his abstract, "this study is not very useful."

The work behind the talk is *The Explorer's Mindset: Lessons in Leadership in Applied Geoscience and the Energy Industry*, first published in 2023 at 337 pages and expanded to 447 in 2025, plus his monthly AAPG Explorer column of the same name.

Great explorers tend to be remembered for one difference-maker skill. Rotzien found they usually master most of the process instead: defining the problem clearly, bringing a team to action, telling a compelling story, business acumen, and tenacity and grit. Those five elements carry a phrase first defined by C. A. Yeilding on her AAPG Distinguished Lecture tour, the Explorer's Mindset.

His closing argument was the one an independent wants to hear. Traits that can be defined can be studied, and traits that can be studied can be built.



Photo: courtesy of Jonathan R. Rotzien

President of Basin Dynamics. BA, Colorado College; Ph.D., Stanford. Has taught at the University of Houston and UT.

THE SIX TRAITS

- 1 A pioneering spirit
- 2 An exploration mindset
- 3 Excellence in research
- 4 Power in building teams
- 5 Entrepreneurship
- 6 Business talent



Photo: from the Aug 20 SIPES Houston flyer

RECAP

From the August 20 Luncheon Talk

Hermann Lebit, Ph.D. • Alma Energy

Lithium in the Waste Stream

Lebit's talk, "Lithium Recovery from Produced Water: Turning Waste to Value," made the case for direct lithium extraction from brine the industry already lifts. Conventional recovery struggles with low concentrations and competing ions.

Alma Energy has identified a previously unrecognized lithium-bearing produced-water resource outside established domestic trends and plans a fast-track pilot on an existing, permitted disposal stream. For a mature field, that is a second revenue stream from water it already handles.

~26 billion

barrels of wastewater brine generated in the US each year

~135 mg/L

average lithium in Alma Energy's produced-water resource

Source: Lebit abstract, Aug 20, 2026

MAPS IN SCHOOLS · BY JEFF LUND

Back to Beta Academy

One year after SIPES Houston presented its geologic map of the lower 48 to Beta Academy, Jeff Lund and EA made a return visit with the Maps in Schools presentation.



The SIPES Houston geologic map of the lower 48 at Beta Academy. Photo: Jeff Lund

On May 4, Jeff and EA did the traditional Maps in Schools presentation, updated with more on lunar geology and the Artemis astronaut story. They reviewed the fossil record, the end of the dinosaurs, and plate tectonics.

On May 7, Jeff returned and introduced geology professor Dr.

Kirsten Siebach from Rice University, who described her research on Mars using the robotic rovers Curiosity and Perseverance.

Beta Academy is an award-winning Texas charter school with 1,700 students in south Houston.

May 4

the Maps in Schools talk

May 7

Mars, with Rice's Dr. Siebach

1,700

students at Beta Academy

“The cool thing for SIPES is our outreach is greatly supplementing the Beta STEM program and will be doing so for years to come.

JEFF LUND, NOVEMBER 5, 2025



Beta Academy, May 2026. Report and photos: Jeff Lund. More at sipeshouston.org/maps-in-schools.

SIPES Log Library

CHAPTER DIGITAL LOG BENEFIT

SIPES HOUSTON LOG LIBRARY

Logs for Members, Online

The chapter's log library has its own page on the website, open to members who log in. Two people have carried much of the work behind it.

Paul Habermas chairs the Log Library on the SIPES Houston board, and Matt Boyce is listed with him in this year's board minutes. The library has been a standing item at this year's board meetings.

By May 2025 logs were coming in steadily, with Dynamic (Jerry Graham) sending logs and about \$4,000 spent on log scanning. The goal set then was to have the library running on the SIPES Houston website.

Sabata Energy Consultants has worked with the board on the library, from the spreadsheet behind it to the member login process.

Veronica, of Nettlecombe Oil Company, has been working with Sabata on that member login process.

Paul also has a large collection of geologic maps and good books, and he is looking for ideas on how members can put them to use. If you have one, find him at the next luncheon.

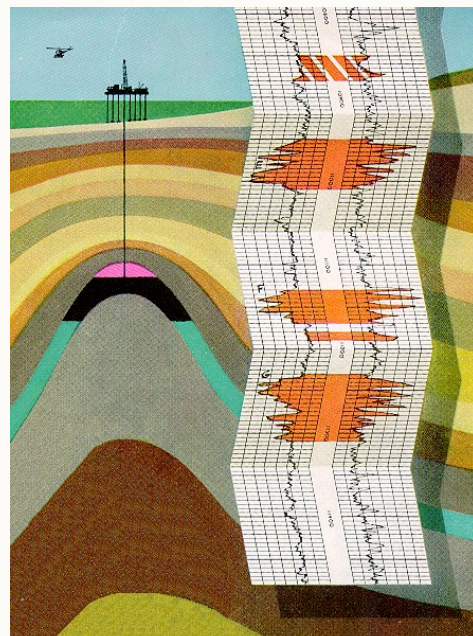


Illustration: sipeshouston.org/log-library

HOW TO GET IN

sipeshouston.org/log-library

Log in with your chapter website account to view the library.

WITH THANKS

Thank you, Paul Habermas and Veronica

Thank you both, from the whole chapter, for the work behind the library.

Sources: SIPES Houston board minutes, May 15, 2025, and March 19, May 21, June 17, and August 20, 2026; sipeshouston.org/log-library.

THANK YOU

Forty-Four, and Counting

This fall the chapter set out to bring back every member whose renewal slipped through a payment changeover. Members answered quickly.
Campaign launched by Tanner Bowersox.

In January, about 80 automatic renewals did not go through. Nothing the members did caused it. A change in how the website handled payments meant those saved cards were never charged, and the renewals quietly lapsed.

The fix came in two parts. First, a new renewal system. When a member pays on the chapter website, the card is held by Stripe through WooPayments, never by the chapter, and nobody at SIPES Houston sees a card number. The same payment sets up next year's renewal, and auto-renew can be switched off in one click.

Second, a personal note to every affected member, starting September 25. Two ground rules shaped it. Nobody is asked to

make up 2025. And nobody gets buried in email: notes go out in batches of up to 25, with no more than three reminders two weeks apart, and then a phone call from a person.

Members answered quickly. About \$1,700 came in within two days of the first note, and 24 members had renewed by September 29. By October 13 the count was 44.

To the 44: thank you. Each of those renewals is next year's renewal, already handled.

To the 28 still to go: there is nothing to untangle. Use the link in your email, or renew at sipeshouston.org under Shop/Dues. Annual dues are \$100.



44 renewed · 28 to go

THE OUTREACH

- SEP
25

First note
A personal renewal email from admin@sipeshouston.org, with a payment link.
- OCT
9

Reminder
An automatic follow-up to members who had not yet renewed.
- OCT
13

One to one
Individual notes from Tanner to each member still outstanding.

NOT SURE WHERE YOU STAND?

Log in to check your status at sipeshouston.org/my-account/subscriptions or ask the office at sipeshoustonchapter@gmail.com.



“This is a huge step toward fixing the annual dues chase.

JEFF ALLEN, DEAL BUYERS CHAIR, TO THE BOARD · Photo: sipeshouston.org

No member names or individual statuses appear in this newsletter. Chart: SIPES Houston dues records, Oct 13, 2026.



SMECTITE • FOR OUR MEMBERS

A Membership System of Our Own

From application to dues receipt, joining SIPES Houston now runs on a system the chapter built for itself.

Designed and built by Tanner Bowersox.

8

short steps for the applicant, signed on screen

6

sponsor questions, word for word, answered online

6 days

between sponsor reminders, three at most

1 PDF

the application plus every sponsor form, nothing retyped

SIPES Houston now runs its own membership system. Smectite went live

September 3, and the board accepted it on September 17. Anyone who wants to join can apply at sipeshouston.org/apply in eight short steps and sign on screen under the federal E-SIGN Act and the Texas UETA.

Sponsors are part of the same flow. Each one gets a private link to the six sponsor questions and signs online. If a form is still outstanding, Smectite sends a reminder every six days, three at most. The chapter does the chasing, not the applicant. When the board approves, the application and every sponsor form come together in one PDF.

FOR MEMBERS

The system keeps working after approval. A status page on the chapter website shows where you

stand, and dues are paid online at checkout, with the card held by Stripe, never by the chapter (page 11). New Houston Affiliates receive their Houston chapter number automatically.

FOR THE CHAPTER STAFF

A staff dashboard tracks every applicant, grouped by who the application is waiting on. Smectite also handles the certificates that still go out by mail, sends the board a Monday digest, and runs one-click email ballots on new members.

WHAT IT ADDS UP TO

- **Faster.** Apply, sign, and sponsor from your desk, at any hour
- **Less paperwork.** No printing, scanning, or retyping
- **Nothing falls through the cracks.** Every application, sponsor form, and renewal is tracked in one place
- **Your choice.** The paper application remains available for anyone who prefers it

Before you begin. The application opens with what to have ready.

The chapter dashboard. Every application, grouped by who it is waiting on.

Screens: sipeshouston.org/online-application-tour. Sample data.

KNOW SOMEONE WHO SHOULD JOIN?

Send them to
sipeshouston.org/apply.



DENDRITE • FIRST LOOK

Hire a Consultant

Dendrite will let a company that needs an independent geologist or geophysicist find a SIPES Houston consultant and hire them directly. No middleman, no finder's fee.

Designed and built by Tanner Bowersox.

Thomas Albright
SIPES Member

Operations geologist and wellsite supervision, Fort Worth Basin

Geoscience and engineering - 29 years
Houston

Operations and wellsite geology Geology

View profile of Thomas

James T. Barlow
Independent listing

Oil and gas attorney: title opinions and mineral estates

Legal - 26 years
Barlow Energy Law, Houston

Title opinions Mineral estates and probate

View profile of James

Walter Brennan
SIPES Member, Houston Chapter

Exploration geologist generating Gulf Coast salt-dome prospects

Geoscience and engineering - 47 years
Brazos Ridge Exploration, Houston

Geology Prospect generation

View profile of Walter

Diane Castellanos
SIPES Member, Houston Chapter

Geochemist: source rock, fluid typing and basin modeling

Geoscience and engineering - 24 years
Houston

Geochemistry Geology

Also open to a permanent position

View profile of Diane

The directory. Large type, plain cards, one button per member.

Margaret Holloway
SIPES Member, Houston Chapter

Independent petroleum geologist, Permian and Gulf Coast prospects

Geoscience and engineering - 41 years of experience
Brazos Ridge Exploration, Houston

With Brazos Ridge Exploration

Email margaret@holloway-ames.com Call 713-555-0101

Save contact

Not matched to a member yet

We could not match your search criteria to a current SIPES Houston member. If you are a member and are looking for a job, please email advertising@houstonchapter.org and we will fix it.

Your profile is not showing yet.
It is switched off. Click it below. "Show me in the directory." turns it on.

Two ways to be listed

Join the Houston Chapter

\$100 a year

- Your listing is free
- The derrick mark identifies your name
- You become a Houston Chapter Affiliate

Apply to join

Houston Chapter Affiliates have local participation only. It is not membership in SIPES. SIPES does not include a SIPES position or title and does not confer a vote or eligibility to elected office.

Independent listing

\$10 a month

- That is \$120 a year
- Changed to your card each month
- Canceled any time
- No derrick mark

Online payment opens soon. The chapter will email you.

A profile. Email and phone go straight to the member.

Two ways to be listed for professionals who are not yet members.

Screens: Dendrite preview from the Sep 24, 2026 board paper. All names, firms, and contact details are made-up demo data.

WHERE IT STANDS

The board approved the \$1,800 flat build payment by email vote on September 24. Final approval of the pages goes to the board, as planned; a launch date will follow. Until then, nothing is live.

The name comes from dendritic drainage, the branching river pattern every geologist learned to sketch, and from branching crystal growth. It suits a network of independents that grows out from one chapter.

Every listed member carries the derrick mark, meaning a verified chapter member, and chapter staff approve each profile before it appears. Members open to a permanent role can say so quietly and attach a CV. The pages are built for large type and simple screens.

Dendrite runs on the chapter's existing hosting at no added cost and is backed by more than 500 automated tests.

PROPOSED PRICING

Houston members, every grade	Free
Independent listing, non-members	\$10 / mo
Firms free if the owner is a member	\$25 / mo
Sponsorships	\$150 / 3 mo \$275 / 6 mo \$500 / yr Principal

AutoKeep

AI BOOKKEEPER · SIPES HOUSTON

The Books in Twenty Minutes

A month of bank statements, store orders, and brokerage reports goes in. A finished treasurer's report comes out.

Designed and built by Tanner Bowersox.

3.5 to 5 hrs

~20 min

a month to build the report, before

a month, now; about 42 hours a year back

AutoKeep runs locally and privately on the treasurer's computer. It reads the chapter's Chase checking and savings statements, pulls ticket and dues orders from the website store, and reads the Vanguard statements. Transactions are categorized automatically, with overrides and splits where a person knows better, and duplicates are caught before they count twice.

What comes out is the workbook the board sees, nine tabs deep: financial position, each account, a monthly summary, a profit and loss for every event, season passes spread across the luncheons they cover, year to date, and the \$1 million goal. At year end, one click builds the package for the CPA.

WHERE THE HOURS WENT

TASK	BEFORE	NOW
Parse statements	45 to 60 min	3 min
Categorize, verify	60 to 90 min	10 to 15 min
Tickets, passes	30 to 45 min	2 min
Per-event P&L	30 to 45 min	automatic
Excel report	45 to 60 min	2 min

Source: AutoKeep overview, September 2026

sipeshouston.org

THE CHAPTER WEBSITE

Quieter, and Sturdier

Most of this fall's website work is invisible, which is the point.

DONE

- Privacy policy and mobile terms published
- Email authentication in place, so chapter mail is more likely to reach the inbox than the spam folder
- Registrar access recovered, so the chapter controls its own domain
- Pending updates applied and the site health warning cleared
- Backups: the full site monthly, store orders nightly

NEXT, PHASE 1

- Confirm administrative control of every account the site depends on
- Remove retired and duplicate add-ons. About 22 of the 44 are under review, aiming for the low twenties
- Document each change

Phase 2, consolidation, and Phase 3, a visual refresh, come later as separate proposals. The new features have their own pages: the online application (page 12), saved cards and the dues-status page (page 11), and Dendrite (page 13).



Log Library. Members log in at sipeshouston.org/log-library. More on page 10.

PHOTOS WANTED

Took a picture at a luncheon this fall? Send it to **admin@sipeshouston.org** with who took it, so we can show the room and credit you.

WHY IT MATTERS

The board votes on this month's numbers, not last quarter's, and every luncheon carries its own P&L. The next treasurer inherits a process instead of a pile of PDFs.

FINANCIAL STANDING · HIGH-LEVEL CHAPTER FIGURES ONLY

Three Times Where We Started

Chapter net worth stands at \$168,269.90 in the September Treasurer's Report, more than triple the June 2023 starting point. That is 16.8% of the way to \$1 million, and \$44,375 ahead of plan. *Plan put together by Tanner Bowersox.*

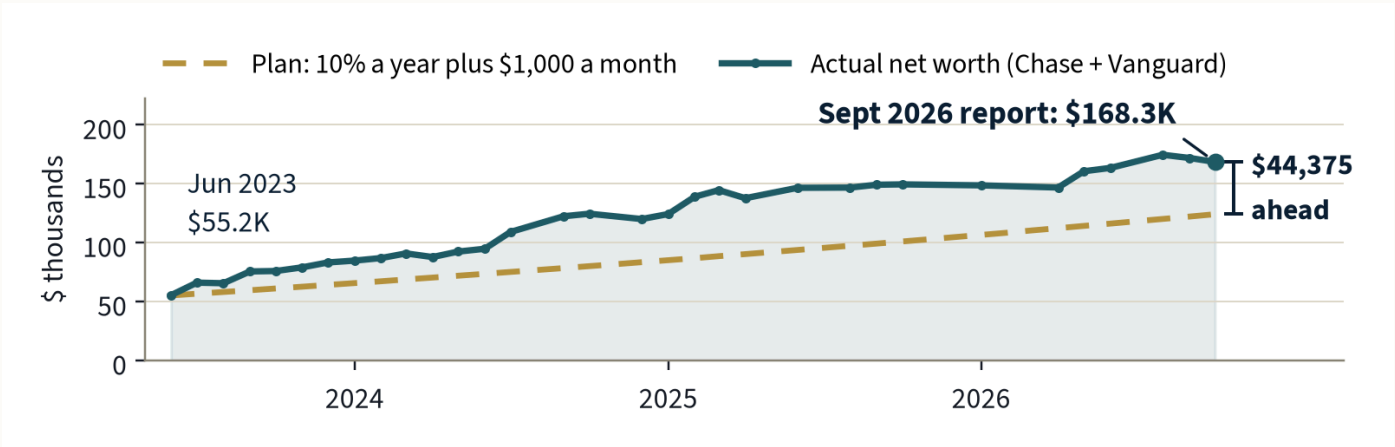


Chart: SIPES Houston total assets by month, from the treasurer's goal workbook. The plan line compounds 10% a year plus \$1,000 a month from \$55,000 in June 2023. Months without a recorded balance are skipped. Source: September 2026 Treasurer's Report.

WHERE THE MONEY IS

ACCOUNT	AS OF	BALANCE
Vanguard (VTI)	Sep 30	\$155,569.40
Chase checking	Sep 30	\$8,143.68
Chase savings	Sep 30	\$1,613.71
Total		\$165,326.79

2026 TO DATE, THROUGH SEPTEMBER

Revenue	\$53,084.03
Expenses	\$48,365.68
Net surplus	\$4,718.35
June Deal Buyers Event, net	\$12,354.35

Source: Treasurer's Report, September 2026. Expenses include \$5,900 for the membership system, dues recovery, and consultant directory.

Open books. Every number on this page is open to questions from any member. Ask at a luncheon, or write to admin@sipeshouston.org.

WHEN DO WE REACH \$1 MILLION?

SCENARIO	PROJECTED
Market growth only	September 2044
Plus \$500 a month	April 2042
Plus \$1,000 a month, the original pace	June 2040

Projections from the September 2026 Treasurer's Report. The goal on the books is \$1 million by 2043.

HOW IT IS INVESTED

The investment account holds one fund: VTI, Vanguard's Total US Stock Market ETF. It owns essentially the whole US market at a 0.03% expense ratio, about \$3 a year for every \$10,000 invested.

Contributions and market gains together have taken the account from \$42,296.41 on March 31, 2023, to \$155,569.40 on September 30, 2026.

The approach: keep costs near zero, keep adding, and give compounding the years it needs.

WHY IT MATTERS

This plan is about keeping SIPES Houston strong for decades. A growing treasury lets us fund future scholarships and keep Maps in Schools and our student outreach going. It helps us hold luncheon and dues costs low, and when lean years come, we can weather them without cutting the programs our members count on.

TEXAS

Permits Up, Rigs Up

DRILLING • STATEWIDE

The Permian Keeps Climbing

The Railroad Commission issued 759 original drilling permits in September, 684 of them for new wells, and processed 961 oil, 280 gas, and 95 injection completions. Midland's District 8 took 323 of the new-well permits and logged 319 new oil completions.

Rigs are following. Baker Hughes counted 603 active US rigs on October 9, the most since May 2024 and 56 more than a year earlier. The Permian added four, to 274, its highest since June 2025 and its eleventh straight week flat or up.

Why it matters: the growth is concentrated where many Houston independents already hold acreage and data.

Sources: RRC, Oct 12, 2026, rrc.texas.gov/news; Baker Hughes via Reuters, Oct 9, 2026, boereport.com



Pumpjack in the Permian Basin. Photo: Quintin Soloviev, CC BY 4.0

REGULATION • STATEWIDE

Old Wells Get a Clock

On October 6 the RRC approved proposed rules under Senate Bill 1150 for "15/25 wells," those inactive for at least 15 years and completed at least 25 years ago. Operators get four ways to extend such a well; otherwise it must be plugged. The rules would take effect September 1, 2027.

Why it matters: public comments close **November 13 at 5:00 pm**. If you carry long-idle wellbores, this is the week to weigh in.

Source: RRC proposed rules and plain-language summary, Oct 2026, rrc.texas.gov



Illustrative: pipeline. Photo: KenB, CC BY-SA 3.0

MIDSTREAM • DELAWARE BASIN

More Room Out of Waha

Energy Transfer agreed October 13 to buy Vaquero Midstream for \$2.6 billion: 300 miles of gathering in four Delaware Basin counties plus the Caymus plant near Waha, 675 MMcf/d today with room for about 1.2 Bcf/d. Energy Transfer's 42-inch Hugh Brinson line to Maypearl began interstate flows June 13, SynMax reported, and its rates went before the RRC on October 6.

Why it matters: processing and takeaway set what Permian gas is worth at the wellhead.

Sources: Gas Compression Magazine, Oct 13; The Texas Dispatch; SynMax blog, Jul 14, 2026

PERMITS, SEPTEMBER

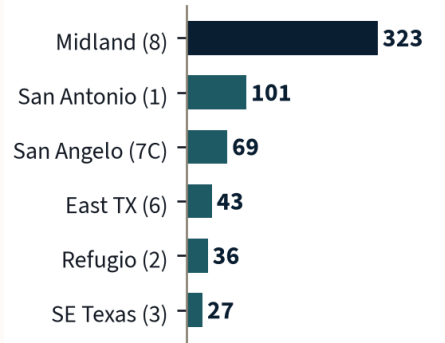


Chart: SIPES Houston, from RRC data

US rigs, Oct 9: oil 462 (up 6), gas 132 (down 1); Haynesville 57, Eagle Ford 49, and offshore 12.

Baker Hughes via Reuters and Permian Basin Oil and Gas Magazine



Illustrative: Valero Three Rivers refinery. Photo: Larry D. Moore, CC BY 4.0

REFINING • EAST TEXAS

Wartime Powers for Tyler

Vice President JD Vance said October 13 that the administration will use the Defense Production Act to expand Delek US's refinery in Tyler, which runs about 74,000 barrels a day. Funding and added capacity were not disclosed, and Reuters notes such expansions usually take many months, if not years.

Why it matters: Reuters reports a broader directive to use the act on refining capacity is expected.

Source: Reuters via Investing.com, Oct 13, 2026

THE GULF



Shenzi platform, Gulf of America. Photo: BSEE, public domain

LEASING • FEDERAL OFFSHORE

A Fourth Gulf Sale, 80 Million Acres Wide

On October 8 the Marine Minerals Administration, formed when BOEM and BSEE were reunified in July, proposed a fourth Gulf of America lease sale under the Working Families Tax Cut law: about 15,104 blocks covering 80.4 million acres, at a 12.5% royalty. A Federal Register notice on October 9 opened a 60-day comment period for Gulf governors, with bids to be opened in March 2027. The first three sales under the law drew \$430 million in high bids.

Why it matters: the agency estimates 26.90 billion barrels of oil and 45.59 Tcf of gas remain undiscovered and recoverable on the Gulf OCS. A fourth sale keeps that acreage in play.

Source: Marine Minerals Administration press release, Oct 8, 2026, boem.gov/newsroom



Illustrative: offshore Vung Tau, Vietnam. Photo: Genghiskhanviet, public domain

PRODUCTION • GULF AND VIETNAM

Murphy Brings Two Online, Finds a Third

Houston-based Murphy Oil put Chinook #8, at Walker Ridge 425, online through the Pioneer FPSO at about 15,000 boe/d gross. Murphy holds 86.7% and Petrobras America 13.3%. Off Vietnam, Lac Da Vang reached first oil September 27, aiming for 10,000 to 15,000 boe/d net at peak in 2028 to 2029, and the Lac Da Trang North-1X well found 131 feet of net pay in 147 feet of water.

Why it matters: one new well on existing Gulf infrastructure is adding about 15,000 barrels of oil equivalent a day.

Source: Oil & Gas Journal, Oct 12, 2026, ogj.com



Crude tanker at Port Arthur, Texas. Photo: Quintin Soloviev, CCO

MARKETS • UNITED STATES

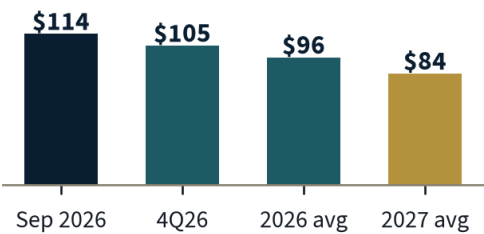
Brent at \$114, and the Long Way Down

Brent averaged \$114 in September. EIA's October outlook sees \$105 for the fourth quarter, \$96 for 2026, and \$84 for 2027, as Middle East production shut-ins ease from 4.5 million b/d this quarter to 2.7 million in early 2027. US crude output is forecast at 13.9 million b/d this year and 14.3 million next; Henry Hub at \$3.48 and \$3.16; LNG exports at 18 and 19 Bcf/d.

Why it matters: EIA's path has prices falling as supply returns. Economics built on September's price may not survive 2027.

Source: EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook, Oct 6, 2026, eia.gov

Brent, \$ per barrel (EIA)



CLOSER TO HOME

The deepest well in this issue is not offshore. It sits under a Louisiana bayou at 30,862 feet. Kevin McMichael tells its story on November 19; see page 6.



Houston Geological Society
PARTNER SOCIETY • SINCE 1923

FREE CROSS-PROMOTION

Two Societies, One Audience

HGS puts SIPES Houston luncheons in front of its members at no cost, and invites us to return the favor.

Jory Pacht first worked with HGS on advertising when he last held the program chair, in 2009. He revived the idea in 2025, and since September 2025 HGS has carried SIPES talks in its email newsletter. In April, HGS Bulletin editor Lucia Torrado set out how it works:

- HGS shares SIPES talks in its email blast, and will keep doing so
- The SIPES ad comes straight from our website calendar, unchanged, so a current listing on sipeshouston.org is all it takes
- SIPES ads do not run in the monthly Bulletin, which is planned further ahead
- HGS offered to send ads for its own talks for us to share

ON THE HGS CALENDAR AFTER OUR NOVEMBER LUNCHEON

NOV 18 WED	How to Write a Good Scientific Paper Continuing education with Drs. Richard Patience and David J. Curry. Virtual, noon to 1:30 pm. Members \$35, honorary and students \$25, non-members \$45.	NOV 19 THU	Houston Geomodelers 4:30 to 6:30 pm, the afternoon of our McMichael luncheon.
NOV 19 THU	NeoGeos Happy Hour 6 to 9 pm, location to be announced. \$5 HGS members, \$10 non-members.	NOV 20 FRI	Fourth Annual Sporting Clays 7:30 am to 1:30 pm. Details and registration at hgs.org.

Source: hgs.org/events, checked Oct 14, 2026. Confirm details and register at hgs.org.



Downtown Houston. Photo: Bobby L. Warren, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

“Our newsletter/email blast tends to reach more people more quickly.”
LUCIA TORRADO, HGS BULLETIN EDITOR,
APRIL 15, 2026

GEOGULF 2027 • APRIL 18 TO 20 • NORRIS CONFERENCE CENTER

Wanted: Next Gen Wildcatters

The 76th GCAGS and GCSSEPM convention, chaired by Charles Sternbach, takes exploration and next-generation leadership as its theme and expects more than 600 attendees. A SIPES "Next Gen Wildcatters" session is being held for four 20-minute talks. If you have a prospect story, a play concept, or a hard-won lesson, send a title and abstract to Ted Godo, through the chapter office, by **December 1**, the convention's call-for-papers deadline.

Monday brings a Wildcatter Party with Bill Armstrong and Diversified Mudlogging at the Moran Hotel, for about 200 guests. Details at geogulf.org.

“You can't find big discoveries without swinging the bat.”

BILL ARMSTRONG, AAPG EXPLORER, JULY 1, 2026

THE CALENDAR

NOV
13
FRI

15/25 rule comments due

RRC deadline, 5:00 pm. See page 16.

NOV
19
THU

**November luncheon: Kevin McMichael,
"Highlander: Confirmation of a Giant Gas Field
in South Louisiana"**

Petroleum Club of Houston. Wine 11:00 am, lunch 11:30.
Tickets at sipeshouston.org/events. See page 6.

DEC
1
TUE

GeoGulf 2027 papers due

Next Gen Wildcatters titles and abstracts. See page 18.

DEC
17
THU

Christmas Drilling Deal Luncheon

Petroleum Club of Houston, the third Thursday as always.
Watch sipeshouston.org/events for tickets.

FROM THE SEPTEMBER 17 BOARD MEETING

- The board accepted Smectite and approved a Houston Affiliate Membership standing rule
- Andy Zitterkopf volunteered as a Houston representative to SIPES National, alongside Walter Light
- Jory Pacht aims to have next year's speakers lined up by the end of October
- Continuing education: Richard Willingham is planning an AI discussion and an ethics talk
- Paul Habermas asked for GeoGulf 2027 booth plans at the next meeting

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Robert Kust; Douglas Dawson, Full; and Jim Fowler and Andy Zitterkopf, Houston Affiliates.

**DUKE RUDMAN'S LADDER TO
SUCCESS • RUNG 11**

**"Never rely on your own
judgment alone, always
get a second opinion."**

One of 15 rungs, furnished by Bill Smith of Wilcox Oil and Gas, Inc. Coming soon: a directory of members who give second opinions for a living (page 13).

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

October luncheon: SynMax Intelligence.

Every chapter sponsor, with logos, is on page 3.

To sponsor a luncheon, contact John Asma at johna@z-terra.com.

NOVEMBER 19 LUNCHEON



Photo: courtesy of Kevin J. McMichael

SIPES HOUSTON
ENERGY ENTREPRENEURS

SIPES HOUSTON • NOVEMBER LUNCHEON
Thursday, November 19

Kevin J. McMichael
Founder, NOLEX and Claymore Oil & Gas L.P.

Highlander: Confirmation of a Giant Gas Field in South Louisiana
A deep gas discovery under St. Martin Parish, Louisiana, proved by a confirmation well drilled to 30,862 feet.

Petroleum Club of Houston • 1201 Louisiana St.
Wine 11:00 am • Lunch and lecture 11:30 am to 1:30 pm
Early-bird pricing until noon Mon., Nov. 16 • \$65 late and walk-in
Tickets: sipeshouston.org/events

REACH THE CHAPTER

Renew: sipeshouston.org, Shop/Dues

Apply: sipeshouston.org/apply

Tickets: sipeshouston.org/events

Office: sipeshoustonchapter@gmail.com

Website and membership:

admin@sipeshouston.org

MASTHEAD • SIPES HOUSTON CHAPTER OFFICERS AND STAFF

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